"केन्द्रीय सरकार के विचार में आवेदक को पासपोर्ट अथवा यात्रा संबंधी दस्तावेज जारी करना जनहित में नहीं होगा" ।

Backlog in Seventh Five Year Plan

2808. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a heavy blacklog in reaching the Seventh Five Year Plan target in regard to MNP designed to improve the standard of living in rural areas and reduce regional disparities in development;

(b) if so, causes for such a slow progress; and

(c) the steps being taken to improve the pace of progress to achieve the target ?

THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI) : (a) The Seventh Plan targets of different components of Minimum Needs Programme have been achieved proportionately to a satisfactory level during first three years of the Seventh Five Year Plan. However, there have been shortfalls under a few programmes in certain States.

(b) The main causes for slow progress under some of the programmes *inter-alia* are under utilisation of funds, delays in acquisition of land for infrastructure like rural roads, primary health centres and community health centres, lack of trained medical and paramedical manpower, preference of farmers for diesel pumpsets as against power energised pumpsets due to unreliability of power supply, adoption of liberal norms for construction assistance in rural housing in some States.

(c) States have been advised to utilise the earmarked MNP funds allocated for different programmes fully and to improve the pace of progress for achieving the plan targets.

Exploration of Ocean Wealth

2809. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some ocean areas are given to foreign companies for exploration of ocean wealth; and

(b) if so, the full details about the number of cases, names of the foreign companies, terms and conditions thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN) : (a) and (b) The exploration of ocean wealth includes a wide range of living and non-living resources. As far as the Department of Ocean Development is concerned, no ocean area is being explored with the help of foreign companies. The entire survey and exploration is being done by the Indian scientists using indigenous technology. The Ministry of Agriculture (Fisheries) and Geological Survey of India also do not get the exploration of sea resources done through foreign companies.

Some contracts, however, have been awarded by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas under the third round of offshore, exploration to foreign oil companies for exploration of hydrocarbons. The details about the number of cases, names of the foreign companies, terms and conditions thereof are given in the enclosed statement.